

REMARKS

This Amendment is in response to the Office Action dated July 24, 2007. Applicant thanks Examiner for the indicated allowability of claims 1, 7, 9, 12 and 14-18 and respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of all remaining claims in view of the above-amendments and the following remarks.

I. DRAWINGS

The drawings were object to under § 1.83(a) as allegedly not showing every feature specified in the claims. Section 1 of the Office Action suggests the limitations “at least one level-2 comparator block” in claim 9 and “at least one level-k comparator block, with $k \geq 2$ ” in claim 14 are not shown on the drawings.

The Applicant does not agree with the Examiner.

As a matter of fact, figure 3 of the present application illustrates an 8-bit comparator, which is precisely a level-2 comparator block (cf. p. 6, l. 16-17 of the present application) as mentioned in the claims of the present application.

As a matter of fact, the level-2 comparator block of figure 3 or 8-bit comparator (cf. p. 14, l. 4-5) compares 8-bit words N and P (cf. p. 14, l. 6-8) and delivers, on a first output (OUT_XOR8_b), information indicating if the words N and P are equal (cf. p. 14, l. 10-11) and, on a second output (OUT_COMP8), the result of the comparison of the two words N and P (cf. p. 14, l. 12-14). The comparator block shown in figure 3 is the level-2 analogy of the level-1 comparator of figure 2 (and mentioned p. 11, l. 23-25 of the present application), which compares 4-bit words N and P (cf. p. 11, l. 26-28) and delivers, on a first output (OUT_XOR4_b), information indicating if the words N and P are equal (cf. p. 11, l. 30-31) and, on a second output (OUT_COMP4), the result of the comparison of the two words N and P (cf. p. 12, l. 4-6).

As a consequence, the feature “at least one level-2 comparator block” in claim 9 and, in the case where $k=2$, the feature “at least one level-k comparator block, with $k \geq 2$ ” in claim 14 are illustrated on the drawings of the present application and more particularly on figure 3.

II. CLAIM OBJECTIONS

Claims 2-6, 8, 10-11 and 13 were objected to because of minor informalities regarding the use of quotes and parenthesis in the claims. With this amendment, the claims are amended as suggested in the Office Action to remove the quotes and parenthesis.

Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the objections to the drawings and claims 2-6, 8, 10-11 and 13 be withdrawn.

The Director is authorized to charge any fee deficiency required by this paper or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 23-1123.

Respectfully submitted,

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